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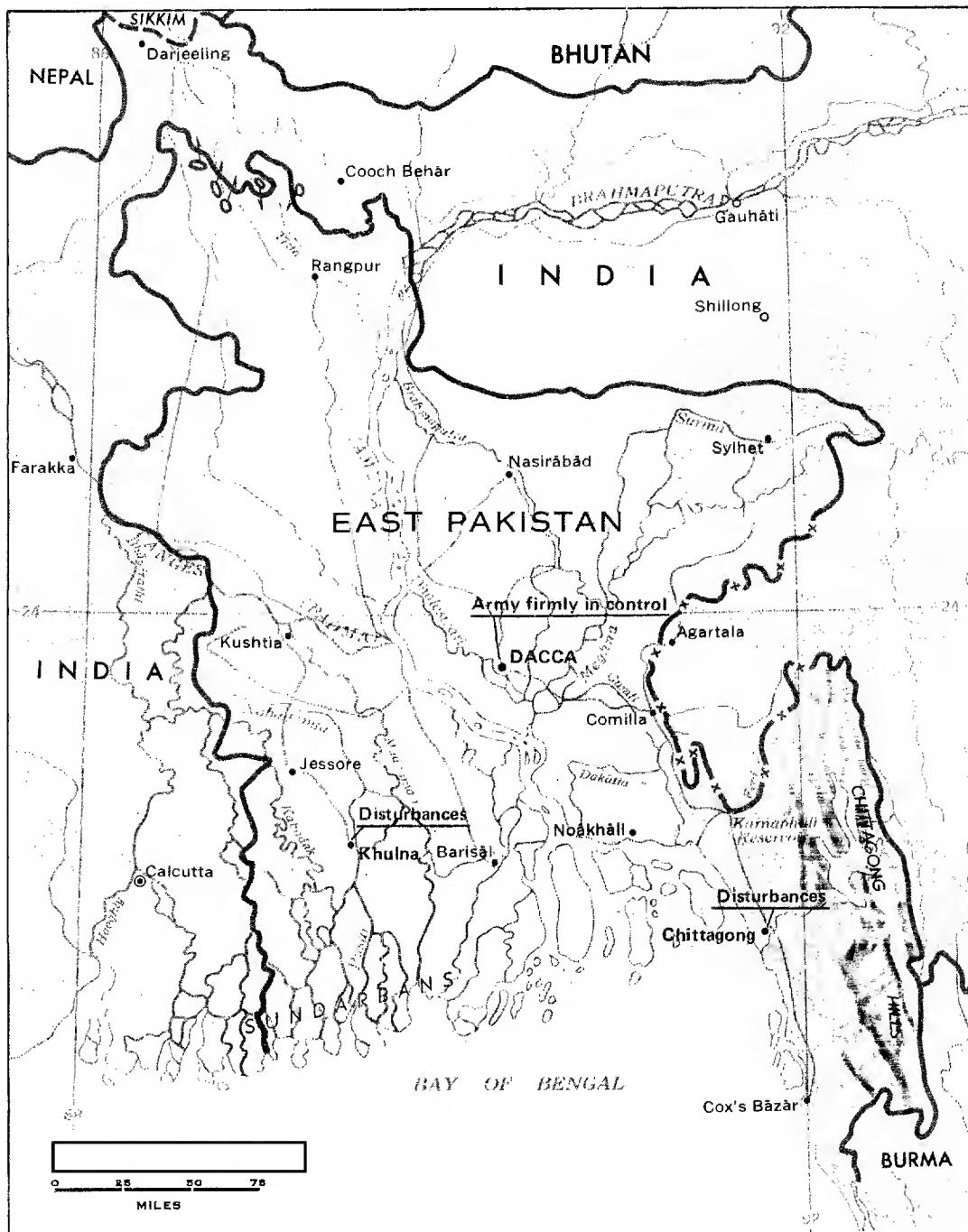
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PAKISTAN: The army is firmly in control of Dacca but the situation in the rest of East Pakistan remains unclear.

Complete censorship of news from Pakistan, the forced evacuation of Western newsmen from Dacca on 27 March, and a breakdown of communications between Dacca and the interior of the province combine to make an assessment of the situation extremely difficult. Totally conflicting reports were issued throughout the weekend by the Pakistan Government radio on the one hand and by the clandestine radio operated on behalf of the secessionists on the other.

By yesterday, the government claimed that peace had been re-established throughout East Pakistan although it admitted that some disturbances had taken place in Khulna, and the situation at Chittagong was described as "improving and well under control." The clandestine Free Bangla Radio, meanwhile, continued to report widespread fighting throughout East Pakistan with the population rallying to the support of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his Awami League.

The clandestine broadcasts continued to deny that Mujib had been arrested and insisted that he was at his headquarters in Chittagong. When the formation of a provisional government of Bangla Desh was announced yesterday, however, it was not Mujib, the logical head of the new regime who allegedly took over but rather a Major Zia Khan; the previous day, he had been identified as the leader of the Bengali "liberation army." This tends to confirm earlier reports that the Awami League chieftain has actually been in custody since early on 26 March.

The government in Islamabad has protested to the US and British governments over the "tendentious and untrustworthy" handling of news on events in East Pakistan by the VOA and the BBC. Rumors are circulating in West Pakistan that "outside powers"

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have been involved in the independence movement in the East Wing. Demonstrations against the US and Britain could well develop.

Meanwhile, the Pakistani Government has lodged a strong protest in New Delhi over alleged Indian interference in Pakistan's internal affairs. The complaint, immediately rejected by the Indians, was based on a discussion in the Indian parliament of events in East Pakistan by Prime Minister Gandhi and others, during which considerable sympathy for the Bengalis was expressed. The Pakistanis also protested the coverage of the conflict by the Indian press and radio.

There is great interest in India in the situation in Pakistan, particularly in Calcutta and the rest of the state of West Bengal where demonstrations in support of the East Pakistanis are being held. Meanwhile, the Indian foreign secretary foresees vast numbers of refugees, mostly Hindus, seeking admittance into India from East Pakistan. He has warned a US official that India will need assistance from the international community in order to care for them.

Dacca itself is relatively quiet. Curfews continue to be imposed at night but during the day large throngs of refugees have been observed leaving the city for the countryside. Eyewitnesses report that large sections of the older and poorer part of the city have been destroyed, in some cases apparently deliberately by the army. There are reports that the army is also attempting to pick up all Awami League leaders, including recently elected members of the national and provincial assemblies, as well as student leaders and faculty members at the university. There is some evidence that a planned program of eliminating these and other opponents of the regime is well under way.

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The eventual effect of destroying the leadership of the relatively moderate Awami League could be to place the direction of future Bengali efforts toward independence in the hands of more extreme political parties. Although small at present, there exists in East Pakistan a Communist organization closely patterned on the extremist Naxalites who have recently caused considerable havoc in the neighboring Indian state of West Bengal.

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SOUTH VIETNAM: The Communists apparently have begun their long-anticipated spring campaign in the northern provinces of South Vietnam.

An enemy force in Quang Tin Province succeeded in inflicting heavy casualties in an attack on a US artillery base--dubbed Mary Ann--some 25 miles southwest of Tam Ky early yesterday. Following a heavy shelling, the base was temporarily overrun. Thirty-three Americans were killed and another 78 were wounded; 12 of the attackers were killed.

The Communists probably will mount attacks elsewhere as well, especially in the central highlands and near Da Nang. [Early today, a heavy Communist rocket and mortar barrage struck the airfield at Da Nang and its environs causing light damage.] The North Vietnamese are also keeping up the pressure on allied forces in the Khe Sanh region. There were several shellings and ambushes over the weekend, none of which caused serious casualties.
(Map) 25X1

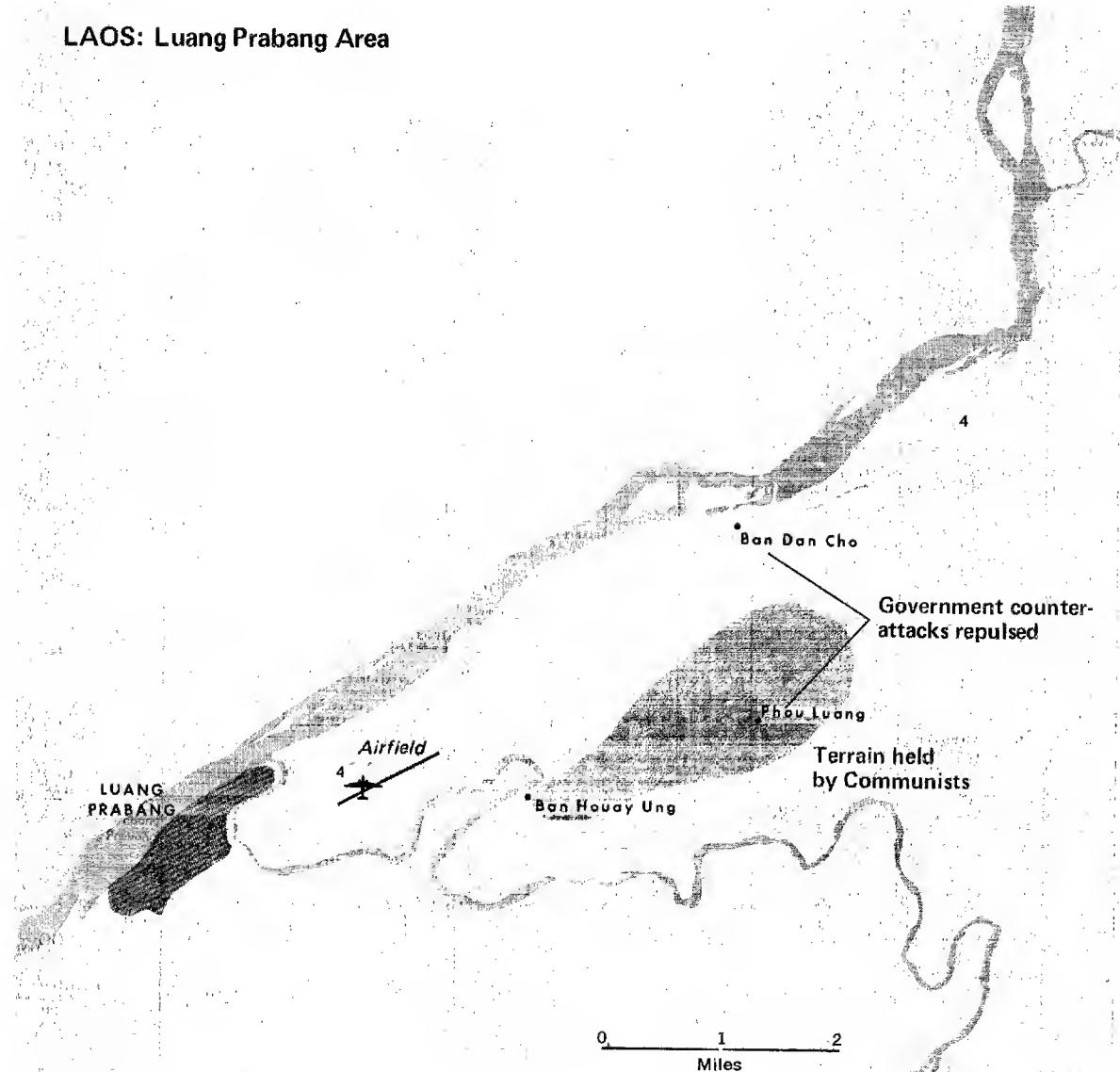
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LAOS: Luang Prabang Area



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LAOS: Sharp fighting was reported in several sections of the country over the weekend, with the most important action taking place near Luang Prabang.

Government forces defending the royal capital made several attempts to contest the Communists' control of the high ground four miles east of town. The threat of enemy artillery fire from this hill mass has curtailed the use of Luang Prabang airport, which lies between the high ground and the capital.

After two days of heavy fighting, irregular units regained a former artillery position just south of Ban Dan Cho on the afternoon of 28 March. Their advance farther northward along Route 4 was blocked, however, by sustained enemy mortar fire. A more ambitious effort to retake Phou Luang, a terrain high-point seized by the Communists on 25 March, was broken up by heavy enemy resistance and by misplaced artillery fire that fell among the government troops.

Morale among military leaders in Luang Prabang appears to be low. After examining the situation there on 26 March, army chief of staff General Ouan expressed doubt that the government could redress recent Communist gains in the capital area--despite growing reinforcements from other military regions. The King apparently believes that the North Vietnamese intend a siege of Luang Prabang and is concerned about arranging airdrops of food and supplies. He remains determined to stay in the capital.

Communist motives in the current fighting around Luang Prabang remain uncertain. Their aim, at least in part, may be to suppress use of the capital's airfield as a military base. A siege of the town seems improbable in view of the Communists' record of desisting from actions against major population centers. Nevertheless, the isolation of the capital could be readily effected by closing Route 13 to the south and by stopping civil as well as military air traffic.

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CHINA-RECOGNITION: Peking and Kuwait will announce the establishment of diplomatic relations today.

The joint communique will state that Kuwait recognizes the Peking regime as the "sole lawful government of China," a formula used in recognition announcements by Canada, Italy, and Chile, and which has now become standard for all states previously recognizing the Nationalist Chinese Government. As a result, Taipei will immediately withdraw its ambassador from Kuwait. The Nationalists had briefly considered authorizing their ambassador to remain in place if the Kuwaitis would guarantee that Kuwait would not demand that he leave, but this apparently was the result of misapprehensions [redacted]

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[redacted] the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry declined to offer the necessary assurances.

Taipei had hoped that by allowing its ambassador to remain, Peking would be forced to accept either a joint Communist-Nationalist presence in Kuwait or the onus of demanding--perhaps unsuccessfully--that Kuwait expel the Nationalist ambassador. This ploy was attempted unsuccessfully in 1964, when France recognized Peking. The Nationalists have avoided any subsequent "humiliation" of this sort, but their hesitation in the present instance suggests that Taipei is casting about for ways of appearing less inflexible on the recognition issue.

Meanwhile, a Communist Chinese "good will" delegation that arrived in Cameroon last week is engaged in negotiating Cameroonian recognition of Peking, and an announcement to this effect may be forthcoming shortly. Kuwait is the seventh, and Cameroon will be the eighth country to recognize Peking since Canada broke the ice last October. [redacted]

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USSR: The 24th CPSU Congress that opens tomorrow will probably last about ten days and will be dominated by General Secretary Brezhnev, with Kosygin and some other politburo members playing important though lesser roles.

Precedent suggests that Brezhnev will open the congress and preside over the nominations of the various congress organs. Contrary to 1966, he will then report on the politburo's stewardship over party affairs since the last congress and the politburo's assessment of domestic and foreign affairs. This will be followed by the shorter and much less important report of the central auditing commission, which has nominal responsibility for auditing the central committee treasury. In 1966, politburo members Suslov and Podgorny, respectively, presided during the presentation of these reports. The chairmanship of the congress rotates more or less according to rank within the politburo and the sequence at this congress may provide some clue to the present politburo pecking order.

Although the practice of allowing all politburo members to speak during the congress was discontinued at the 1966 conclave, discussion of these reports, particularly Brezhnev's, will still occupy the congress for five or six days. The discussion, which will probably be opened by the first secretary of the Moscow city party committee, will be dominated by the first secretaries of republic and other important party organizations. Other speakers will probably include Podgorny as chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, Shelepin as head of the trade unions, and the ministers of defense and foreign affairs.

The discussion of Brezhnev's report will be interrupted periodically by representatives of important foreign Communist parties who will present greetings to the CPSU. The proceedings of the 23rd

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Congress suggest that the number of such interruptions will be small. After exhaustive discussion, the congress will unanimously adopt a decree on Brezhnev's report and approve the report of the auditing commission.

At about mid-point in the congress, probably with Brezhnev presiding, Kosygin will present the draft directives for the five-year plan. The directives will be the subject of discussion, primarily by various government officials, for three days, again with a sprinkling of statements by representatives of foreign Communist parties. The chairman of the Ukrainian Council of Ministers will probably open the discussion and be followed by his counterparts from other important republics and by high-ranking planning officials.

Kosygin's speech concluding the discussion will be followed by the election of the central committee, which will then meet to elect the politburo and secretariat. During the final session of the congress, the delegates will unanimously adopt the politburo report and the five-year plan. Brezhnev will report on the results of the first plenum of the newly elected central committee, including the composition of the "new" politburo and secretariat.

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UN - MARITIME ISSUES: The initial preparatory meeting for the 1973 Law of the Sea conference has produced mixed results and some initiatives troublesome to US objectives.

The 1973 conference is expected to consider such issues as territorial waters, rights of passage through international straits, and regulations to govern peaceful exploitation of the resources of the ocean floor. The high stakes have focused considerable attention on the UN General Assembly's seabeds committee, which is charged with planning the conference. Although snarled for a time by procedural hassles, the committee was able to complete its nearly month-long work session on schedule on 26 March, having made generally encouraging progress, at least in identifying competing interests.

Latin American states with 200-mile claims to territorial waters have obtained greater respectability for their assertions, however. They were particularly effective in gaining converts among the less-developed coastal states to their view that the major powers' fishing activity off such nations must be curtailed by means of broad "exclusive zones." Brazil also attacked the US proposals for an international regime to control peaceful utilization of seabeds for commercial purposes beyond a water depth of 200 meters. The international community has yet to reach a consensus on this controversial subject. [redacted]

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SIERRA LEONE



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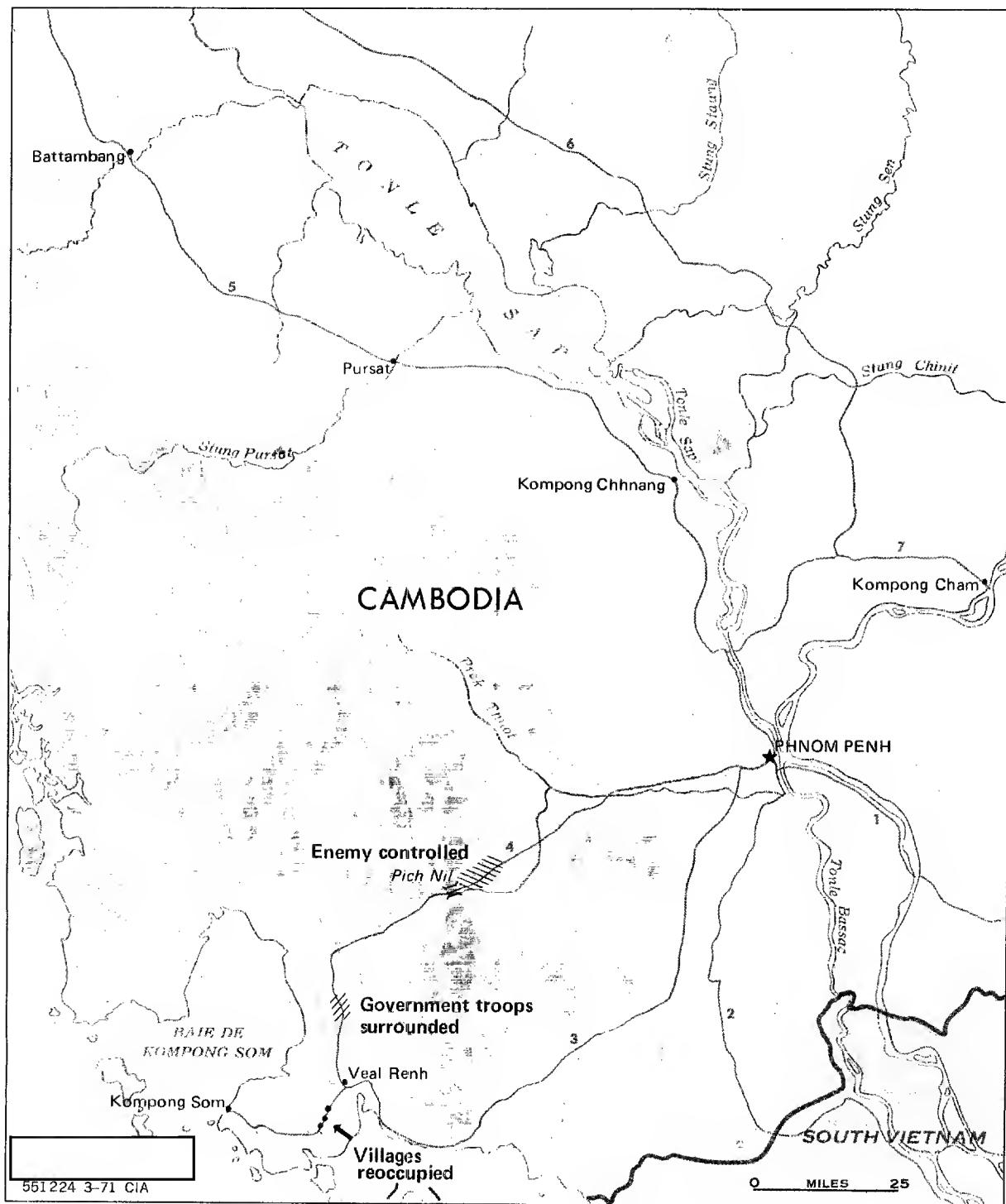
SIERRA LEONE: Prime Minister Stevens, bolstered by the arrival of more Guinean troops, forcefully reasserted his authority in Freetown yesterday.

While the factionalized Sierra Leonean Army debated the continuation of his civilian regime late last week, Stevens arranged for immediate additional troop support from his political ally, Guinean President Toure. An initial contingent of Guinean soldiers that arrived in Freetown on 19 March played a key role in protecting Stevens during the unsuccessful coup attempt by his army chief last week. Yesterday at least three truckloads of armed Guinean troops dressed in civilian clothes drove into Sierra Leone's capital and more may be en route. In a morning radiobroadcast, Stevens announced that the troops had come at his request in accordance with a defense agreement just signed with Guinea. Stevens implied that the Guineans would be used to deal with "dangerous elements" in his own army.

Stevens' injection of more Guinean soldiers into Sierra Leone's latest internal political crisis seems certain to erode further his domestic support, particularly within his own army. No moves against Stevens or the Guinean troops have been reported since the additional Guinean soldiers arrived, however. As of late yesterday there was no activity at any of the army barracks in the Freetown area and the city was quiet with Guineans guarding Stevens' residence.

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NOTES

CAMBODIA: The Communists thwarted government efforts over the weekend to reassert control over Route 4 near Pich Nil Pass. A Cambodian Army armor and infantry force that attempted to move toward the pass from the east was pushed back by heavy enemy mortar and ground fire on 26 March, leaving the Communists astride a ten-mile section of the roadway. Initial reports suggest that government casualties and material losses may have been heavy. At the same time, enemy forces have renewed attacks on government troops at the north end of the pass and also are reported to have surrounded other forces farther south on Route 4 near Veal Renh. On 26 March, government forces reoccupied without opposition the three villages south of Veal Renh that were overrun by the Communists late last week.

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BERLIN: No progress was made in the talks on 27 March between West Berlin Senat and GDR officials on the issuing of Easter passes to West Berliners. West Berlin hopes for an Easter agreement were squelched when the East German negotiator rejected an arrangement limited to the Easter holiday and again proposed conclusion of a general agreement. Senat Director Mueller reiterated that he is authorized only to discuss Easter visits. The meeting broke off after four hours without setting a date for further talks.

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